

Gifts Policy

1. Purpose

This policy explains what the Commission considers is a 'gift' and the principles to be applied in relation to the offer, acceptance or refusal of gifts. It also sets out the boundaries for giving of gifts and the requirement for a gift register.

2. Scope

This policy applies the Board and all Commission employees, inclusive of authorised persons, members of or assisting an Integrity Tribunal and contractors.

In the case of State Servants, non-compliance with this policy is likely to constitute misconduct and may be dealt with under *Employment Direction No 5*. It may also result in prosecution under the Criminal Code.

The policy is underpinned by the Commission's core values of respect, accountability, professionalism, collaboration and trust.

What is and what is not a **'gift'** is explained in **Attachment 1**. A gift includes any hospitality, gratuity, favour, discount, entertainment, loan, forbearance, or other benefit having monetary or other personal value.

3. Policy statement

Our responsibility as an integrity organisation is to improve the standard of conduct, propriety and ethics in Tasmania's public sector.

The offer and acceptance of gifts (including any personal benefit to oneself or to family and friends) creates a conflict of interest between our private interests and our public duty, and therefore poses a risk to our perceived and actual independence, integrity and reputation.

Consequently, our staff should not expect to receive a gift for doing a job they are paid by the public to do. In most situations, 'thanks' is enough.

4. Whole of government policy

A [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy](#) was released by the Head of the State Service under Section 15(1)(b) of the *State Service Act 2000*.

The Policy sets out the broad principles to be applied by and to all Tasmanian State Service officers and employees in relation to the offer, acceptance or refusal of a gift,

benefit or hospitality. The Commission's policy is compliant with and goes further than, the whole of government policy.

5. Key principles

1. In relation to gifts, staff in the course of their duties must:
 - ▼ never solicit a gift in the course of their work, for either personal gain or benefit, or for the gain or benefit of anybody else
 - ▼ decline all offers of gifts, except where non-acceptance is not appropriate or may cause offence
 - ▼ declare every offered gift on the approved gift declaration form
 - ▼ decline any money or money equivalent gifts, drugs or illegally obtained property that is offered to them. In such circumstances staff must immediately declare the offer and report it to the CEO
 - ▼ never voluntarily enter into competitions or prize draws in the course of their work
 - ▼ decline prizes won at a work event, and
 - ▼ communicate this policy to the organiser of any event where they have been asked to speak or present. An example communication is **Attachment 2**.
2. Staff may accept without declaring, a **token memento** or **modest refreshment** if it is included as part of a work event and not regularly occurring.
3. All gifts received will be immediately recorded in the Commission's *Gifts & Benefits Register*.
4. If a gift has been accepted or staff are to accept **regularly occurring token mementos** or **modest refreshments** worth more than \$50 from one supplier in a 12-month period, the gifts must be declared.
5. Accepted gifts are the property of the Commission until decided otherwise.
6. The Commission expects that acceptance of a gift beyond a token memento or modest refreshment will be a rare occurrence. However, if staff feel that *significant* offence or embarrassment will result from declining the offer of the gift, the gift may be accepted. If this occurs, the gift must be immediately declared.
7. Any gift to be offered by the Commission as part of its business functions must receive prior approval of the CEO. The gift must be recorded in the Commission's *Gifts & Benefits* register.

6. Register

The CEO is to maintain an internal register of all gifts offered and received by Commission staff. The internal register is to contain:

- ▼ Date of declaration
- ▼ Employee name and position (job title and unit/division/branch/section)

- ▼ Name of company and/or individual offering gift
- ▼ Date of offer/receipt
- ▼ Description of gift
- ▼ Estimated actual value
- ▼ Reason for offer
- ▼ Regardless of the decision, is there or would there be a conflict of interest in accepting this gift? Perceived; Actual; Potential
- ▼ Relationship:
 - ▽ Does a discretionary decision-making authority exist between the employee or anyone in the agency and the offeror?
 - ▽ If there is no direct discretionary decision-making authority between the employee and the offeror, could the gift cause a conflict of interest with other discretionary decisions in the agency?
- ▼ Decision:
 - ▽ Declined/returned (state which)
 - ▽ Disposed of (state how)
 - ▽ Accepted by agency (state use)
 - ▽ Accepted by employee (state conditions)
- ▼ Reasons for decision
- ▼ Decision-maker name and position (job title and unit/division/branch/section)
- ▼ Date of decision

7. Publication of the register

In accordance with the requirements of the State Service Management Office, all reports are to be available on our website within 15 calendar days of the end of each reporting period. The reporting periods are:

- ▼ 1 July – 30 September
- ▼ 1 October – 31 December
- ▼ 1 January – 31 March
- ▼ 1 April – 30 June

The **public version of the register** is to contain:

- ▼ Date of declaration
- ▼ Employee unit/division/branch/section
- ▼ Name of company and/or individual offering gift
- ▼ Date of offer/receipt
- ▼ Description of gift

- ▼ Estimated actual value
- ▼ Decision-maker job title and unit/division/branch/section
- ▼ Date of decision
- ▼ Decision: Declined/returned; Disposed; Accepted by agency; Accepted by employee
- ▼ Reasons for decision

8. Responsibilities

CEO

- ▼ Provide guidance to staff.
- ▼ Report the offer of money or money equivalent gifts, drugs or illegally obtained property to Tasmania Police if necessary.
- ▼ Maintain the internal Gift register and ensure the public version is reported on the Commission's website.
- ▼ Ensure that the Commission's annual audit and risk management process includes a review of compliance with this policy and that findings are reported to the Board.

Directors

- ▼ Ensure that their staff understand the implications of acceptance of gifts and put in place processes that support this Policy.
- ▼ Seek clarity and/or guidance from the CEO about any issue or instance that may be considered non-compliance with this Policy.

The Director, Corporate Services has specific responsibilities:

- ▼ Ensure all declarations are recorded in the Commission's Gifts Register as soon as possible after a declaration is made.
- ▼ Ensure the public version of the Gifts Register is published on the Commission's website in accordance with the policy.

Employees

- ▼ Declare all gifts, including benefits and hospitality, in accordance with this policy.
- ▼ Seek guidance from their Director about any issue relating to this Policy.
- ▼ Comply with any additional processes implemented by Directors to support this Policy.

9. Related documents

- ▼ Statement of Values & Conduct

- ▼ Conflict of Interest Policy
- ▼ [Gifts and Benefits Register \(internal\)](#)
- ▼ [Gifts and Benefits Register](#) (public template)
- ▼ Offer of a Reportable Gift Form

10. Other

- ▼ *Integrity Commission Act 2009*
- ▼ *State Service Act 2000, ss 9(11)– (12)*
- ▼ *State Service Regulations 2011, reg 12*
- ▼ *Criminal Code Act 1924, Chapter IX ‘Corruption and Abuse of Office’*
- ▼ Employment Direction No 5

11. Document control

Version	Release Date	Reference	Reason
1.0	5/2/2019	2019/000180	Original release
2.0	11/9/2019	2019/000180	Major revision
2.1	10/3/2021	2019/000180	Update to require publication of Gifts and Benefits Register, and other minor edits
3.0	1 April 2024	2019/000180	General review and corrections

12. Document management

Corporate Services

Approved



Michael Easton
Chief Executive Officer
 1 April 2024

ATTACHMENT 1

What is a gift?

In considering an offer and acceptance of gifts, the central considerations should be:

- what is the intent of the offer? and
- what would an impartial observer think?

In summary, staff should not expect to receive a gift for doing a job they are paid by the public to do. In most situations 'thanks is enough.'

Definitions

Gift means any hospitality, gratuity, favour, discount, entertainment, loan, forbearance, or other benefit having monetary or other personal value gained by a person in the course of or in relation to their duties at the Integrity Commission, from any person or entity other than the Commission. It includes, but is not limited to:

- ▼ a gift of money or money equivalent
- ▼ a gift of a physical object
- ▼ the conferring of a benefit (of monetary or other personal value)
- ▼ the conferring of an honorary degree, title, or award
- ▼ a purchasing incentive, such as a gift of goods and/or services with purchase, other promotional reward, discount or loyalty points offered generally to any public purchaser or to a broadly defined class of purchasers of a particular good or service, a redemption or frequent buyer card, which is received in relation to the purchase of a particular good or service for the Commission
- ▼ indirect or concealed gifts such as:
 - ▽ the permanent or indefinite loan of money or property
 - ▽ the sale or transfer of property at less than full value
 - ▽ the provision of a benefit which has a financial or commercial value for less than full value, or
 - ▽ meals, drinks, and other hospitality.
- ▼ sponsored travel e.g. accommodation, airfares, taxi fares, vehicle hire
- ▼ education or training not offered or paid for in full by the Commission or the individual e.g., an external conference or seminar ticket, externally hosted training course, or completion or award of an external qualification, or
- ▼ entertainment e.g. tickets to arts/sporting/recreational events, for less than full value.

A gift does not include:

- ▼ a **token memento** received as part of business functions.

- ▼ an item or hospitality provided by the Commission to celebrate a significant staff milestone or achievement
- ▼ an event hosted by the State which you attend at the State's cost, or
- ▼ an item given or received between Commission staff members e.g., on a staff birthday, provided it does not create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest with respect to internal decision-making.

A **token memento** is an item of little intrinsic value, such as a greeting card or confectionery. Token mementoes are commercially valued at less than \$20.

A **modest refreshment** is food or other refreshment such as catering for a training course or other normal work interactions, typically of less than \$20 value. It may include light meals provided during workshops, training sessions or other events where staff are invited presenters (but only where attendees are not paying for the event or meal).

Regularly occurring means the acceptance of **token mementos** or **modest refreshments** from a single supplier which in total are valued at \$50 or higher in a 12-month period.

Government buyer is anyone to whom this Policy applies who acquires goods and/or services for the Commission.

Money or money equivalent includes cash, financial instruments, shares, units, gift cards/vouchers, discount coupons, loyalty bonus points that may be redeemed for a cash or non-cash personal reward, lottery tickets, 'scratchies', credit cards, debit cards with credit on them, memberships, prepayments such as phone or internal credit, and any item that may be readily converted to cash.

Sponsored travel includes the provision of transport, accommodation or living expenses to anyone to whom this Policy applies, other than from the Commission's funds or the person's own resources.

ATTACHMENT 2

Standard communication to event organisers

As is our standard practice, I am letting you know in advance that our staff adhere to a policy of not accepting gifts or benefits in our work. We look forward to assisting your [agency/organisation] and a simple 'Thanks' is enough if you wish to express appreciation for our work.

If your [organisation/agency] would like to express further appreciation, you are welcome to send a message to contact@integrity.tas.gov.au.